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nation is education. What does education need from the Federal Government in the future? It needs three things: unification of the Government's own educational enterprises; studies on a large scale of the educational problems of the country; and leadership. To meet these needs there must be a consolidation of bureaus and offices at Washington and a larger, better supported, more influential establishment that can command the services of the best minds in the country. Whether this establishment should be an independent department, a commission, or a division of a department is of secondary importance—although most of us have our preferences. It is of first importance that the establishment be charged with only those functions which experience has proved are helpful and vitalizing to American education everywhere."

H. B. LEARNED AND S. P. CAPEN,
in the *Educational Record*.

COLLEGE STUDENTS OF SUPERIOR ABILITY.*—"How can the opportunities given by the college to students of superior ability be increased?

"There are two groups of persons to whom an effort to solve the problem does not appear important. There are those who have assumed that a 'first-class' person will take care of himself both in college and subsequently. There are also those who appear to believe that everything possible is already being done through the avenue of personal contact of teacher with student. But there are few college teachers who would join either group in thrusting aside an earnest consideration of the subject as an important problem and in refusing to enter upon a more determined effort at solution...

"...The first group thus cannot maintain its position. The second group cannot remain pessimistic concerning possible advances in view of the fact that we have not heretofore made a sustained study of this problem in our colleges. The question is not, 'Can able students be assisted?' but rather, 'What are the ways of assisting them?'

"College teachers have entered upon their careers partially because of the opportunities of developing leadership in young people and thus of rendering to society a great service. There is apparently no more gratifying news to a college faculty than the report of the

* Compare report of Committee G in the February BULLETIN.

success of a graduate, particularly in the field of intellectual leadership. Moreover, all college faculties take pride in the relative number of students who have passed on into the graduate school of a university. Professors who are recognized as successful do encourage students of ability chiefly through personal contact in advanced courses, and this opportunity is highly prized.

"There are efforts at solution in addition to the assistance rendered by departments as such. These are varied, but they might be classified as pedagogical, curricular, and social, though these terms are not mutually exclusive and do not suggest the exact nature of the efforts to be included. Among them the following methods and devices have been found:

Pedagogical

Sectioning of classes upon the basis of ability.

Encouragement of advanced courses essential as a preparation for graduate work.

Assignment of additional work for the abler student, the reward of accomplishment being either additional credit or higher grades.

Modification of courses for the able student.

Use of undergraduate assistants selected on the basis of ability.

Curricular

Use of 'honor points,' a minimum number being required for graduation.

Use of 'honor points,' these being in the form of actual credits toward graduation.

Establishment of 'special honors' courses.

Limitation of registrants in the freshman class, thus permitting a selection on the basis of ability or of attainment.

Additional registration permitted but made quantitatively dependent upon previous grades.

Modification of curricular requirements to make possible the substitution of individual work for course assignments.

Social

Election to membership in national honor societies—an honor open only to juniors and seniors.

Election to membership in local honor societies. A few of these have a temporary membership open to freshmen, sophomores, and juniors.

'Honors and prizes,' as usually described in catalogues.

Selection and recognition of high ranking students in the freshman year and also in other years.

Notification to parents of the high scholastic standing, especially of underclassmen, and preparation of appropriate publicity for home papers.

Personal recognition by the president of students of high attainment.

Limitation of extra-curricular activities.

Organization of departmental clubs.

Publication of grades of fraternities.

Scholarships and other financial aid, the recipients being selected on the basis of attainment. . .

"The writer has not inserted a list of faculty activities in behalf of those of superior ability as distinguished from those of superior attainment, and the reason for the omission is merely that he can find none to present. Innate differences in ability and the opportunities to base assistance upon these differences are not yet recognized as elements in college education that should claim the attention of the faculty as such.

"A second fact, indicative of opportunity for improvement, is that in none of the colleges visited by the writer had the faculty recognized the need of a continued study of the subject to the extent of appointing an individual, or individuals, specifically for this purpose. In other words, by common consent, the solution of the problem is now regarded as the business of every faculty member and modifications in practice are left to chance interest and spasmodic efforts. But the inherent difficulties of the problem demand a special interest on the part of a few who understand the scientific aspects and who are willing to examine with care the effects of the different measures adopted. . .

"But, even so, one is inclined to raise the question as to what the faculty or its organized committee or group can do in the future. Specifically, what is the task of such a committee? The writer wishes to suggest three activities and to discuss them briefly. They are as follows: (1) an annual inventory, (2) recommendations to the faculty, (3) service where faculty representation is needed.

"The first suggestion, that of an annual inventory, is peculiarly appropriate in view of the opinion found among faculty men that there should be at least one faculty meeting a year devoted to the problem of the superior student. . .

"If an effort, for example, is intended to increase the social recognition of high scholarship, its results are to be determined by observation of effects in the entire student body. But if the effort is expected to assist just the few of high ability, then its effectiveness can be determined only through an understanding of the influence upon these few students. For example, the opportunity of studying for honors in the senior year is sometimes abolished upon the ground that only a few students are interested. This would be an adequate reason if the function of these 'special honors' is to increase a general interest in high attainment. But if the function is to render assistance to the most able students, then the inquiry concerning effectiveness should be made upon that basis. If only three per cent of the seniors take the 'special honors,' and if these are actually of high ability, the question to ask should be, 'does the opportunity actually assist these three per cent?' . . .

"For the faculty has at least four additional interests, pertinent to our problem concerning the student of high ability, and none of them is a matter for legislation or for departmental activity only. These interests are: the effectiveness of the student honor societies, the guidance of the student of high ability in the first two years, the organized study of the senior students in the interest of appropriate faculty assistance and the contact with outside agencies that are also concerned with education of the student of high ability. . .

"There are three opportunities for securing this evidence: intelligence tests, scholastic records, and opinions of the instructors. It is anticipated that the first and last of these three will serve the important purpose of detecting latent superior ability. . .

"In order to represent these interests on the part of the faculty and preserve continued attention to the problems of each annual group of students, the organization of a faculty committee on superior attainment seems to be necessary. This committee should study the local situation from year to year, and its membership should contain the adviser selected to confer with the students. . .

"The amount of time demanded of those selected to take special interest in this class of students is not great, but the inclination of the faculty will be to ask some one connected with the administration to assume the additional load which is here suggested. To follow this inclination without additional reason is not wise, for here you have a highly specialized task which demands a deep and rather single interest. It is not correct to insist that an adminis-

trative officer should not be active in this suggested faculty committee or organized representation. But the appointment should depend primarily upon interest, ability, and willingness to serve. The committee should not be a part of the machinery to grind out results but its members should be special students of the problem. The appointment of the committee should not reduce faculty responsibility but rather should increase faculty activity both as individual members and as a group...

"The discussion has been written with the college of arts and sciences in mind, but the points made apply, with greater or less emphasis, to all colleges, whether professional or not. We are really at the beginning of efforts in education based upon individual differences. That there are such innate differences has been known for an indeterminate period. But in recent years we have entered upon the era of measurement applied scientifically to individuals and to education itself. There will therefore be found essentially new steps in education and we must recognize our colleges as laboratories wherein experiments must be carefully made and the results thoughtfully evaluated.

"To summarize, this paper commends the following action on the part of the college:

"1. The appointment of a committee (which might be called 'The Committee on Attainment').

"2. The activity of such a committee should be:

"(a) To prepare an inventory of present methods for detecting and encouraging students of superior ability.

"(b) To prepare annual recommendations to the faculty.

"(c) To increase the effectiveness of student honor societies; guide students of high ability in the first two years; organize a study of the senior students; co-operate with outside agencies.

"Although to some extent detailed suggestions are made in regard to these activities, it is to be remembered that the problem in each college must be approached in the spirit of finding the most effective recommendations and activities for that particular college. Moreover, in method alone an adequate solution of the problem cannot be found for there must be brought to bear not only the science, but also, in an important sense, the art of education."

G. W. STEWART, in *School and Society*.

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